or ten buses running to small centers.

3. Own and operate your own buses.

Summary.—The four economies mentioned are only a few of the possible ones suggested in the introduction. A forty-eight weeks' school term might more than cut the present cost of education in half, co-operative purchasing of supplies might net the state no insignificant sum, and so on through numerous items, small and large. The educational dollar is probably spent more wisely than any other dollar of public funds, unless Health and Welfare have a just claim; but as efficiency engineers in education, we have barely started. Virginia is the first and only state so far to officially organize to test its own laws, regulations, and standards in a systematic and comprehensive way. We have been buying education "in a poke" long enough. We need to know what we intend to purchase and take a look at it rather than pay out good money for something which is thought to represent something which might be good.

The fundamental principles of economy in education are:

1. Know specifically what school money is supposed to purchase.
2. Pay out the money only on evidence that educational values have been received. These principles are easier stated than practiced, but we can do much more in this respect than we have been doing. The emphasis in education for the next decade or two should be upon how to secure more education for the money we have.

SIDNEY B. HALL

We think if by tight economy we can manage to arrive at independence, then indeed we will begin to be generous without stay. We sacrifice all nobleness to a little present meanness.—THOREAU.

ENGLISH CURRICULUM PROBLEMS IN VIRGINIA

I WELCOME this opportunity to present to this group of Virginia college and high school teachers some of the significant issues facing all of us who are interested in the English curriculum for the secondary school pupils of this state. There are at least four groups effecting changes or influences upon this curriculum. First, there are those who are primarily interested in the whole program of the secondary school and who are trying to determine the place of secondary education in our present social order. We are seeking to discover what learnings are of the most significance to the adolescent child during the period of his life normally spent in high school. Second, there are those who teach the adolescent child the use and the literature of his mother tongue. They are asking what of the great body of our unexcelled language will be of greatest value to the secondary school child. Third, there are those who teach English to that group of boys and girls who enter our colleges each year. You are concerned with the secondary school preparation of these children. There is also a fourth agency over which we have less control, but which, nevertheless, is influencing the program of the high school. That agency is society itself. It is made up of voters and political leaders together with the very forces of geographic and traditional barriers. These, too, determine the nature and pattern of the education of the adolescent child.

In this paper I propose to give some fundamental facts and principles regarding secondary education in general together with some basic assumptions regarding the English curriculum. Let me call your attention first to those regarding secondary education in general. Some of these are commonplaces. I cite them not as something new, but as a set of situations of which we cannot lose sight if we are to be

on solid ground in our educational program.

In the first place, the social and industrial life which the normal child of today enters is in only a few respects like the one his grandfather knew. The demands made upon him are of a different nature, and the training and education he receives must likewise be changed if he is to be able to cope with the experiences of life. However, there abounds on all sides plenty of evidence, scientific and otherwise, to convince the thinking man that the average modern high school and college are more like than unlike those institutions which served his grandparents. In other words, our educational institutions are recognized social laggards and have been unable to orient themselves properly and adapt their instruction and purposes to a changed social order.

In the second place, the principle of public support of education is universally accepted today. Educational institutions are, therefore, business investments and not philanthropies. If they are business investments, they must account creditably for the money spent, and their products must show satisfactory evidence of the worth of this expenditure. It is incumbent upon us as state educational employees to return satisfactory stewardship to the agency that intrusts its children and its funds to our care. Some figures are pertinent here. In the eleven southern states reporting to the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools the average number of children graduating from the high schools the last five years was only 15.3% of the total enrolment of those secondary schools. In Virginia alone this figure was 13.4%. When more than six-sevenths of our high school children leave the secondary school without completing it, either because of accumulated social forces operating against them or are forced out because of a lack of peculiar fitness to meet the requirements of the narrow curriculum and selective subject matter, our schools cannot be said to be paying those returns normally expected from a sound business investment. Dr. Briggs[1] states the matter clearly when he says: "It is a paradox of democracy for the state to reach its hands into the pockets of the poor to procure funds for the advancement of those already blessed by nature or by parental heritage, and yet this is exactly what the state is doing." And that, after collecting the money, it forces out a large number of the children of those from whom it collected its funds is made strikingly significant in this statement. The real forcefulness of the issue, however, is not brought to our attention until one of our own flesh and blood finds difficulty or fails in our educational institutions. We have not lost sight of the fact that the numbers in our high schools have increased tremendously, but we seem to be but slightly conscious of the decrease of the selectivity of the personnel and of their needs and contemplated service to humanity.

In the third place, and this issue is closely related to the second one I have just raised, we are confused over the selection of the materials of the curriculum which we shall require the child to study. We are grasping at the straws of doubt because we are uncertain both of the present offerings and of the value of untried materials. We are asking children to gamble their lives away on contingent values. The one dominating force that has determined the content of the high school curriculum from the early academies to our present institutions is the college. It has so phrased its requirements for admission that every child in America who has ever attained all or part of a secondary school education has felt the force of its strength. To the credit of the college let it be said that it has not done this with malicious intent, but only in an attempt to define a college-fit person and to guarantee to itself the quality of student it desires for admission. In claiming a right

---

[1]Briggs, Thomas H.—The Great Investment. (Inglis Lecture, 1930, Harvard University,) p. 130. Harvard University Press.

to determine the nature of the student seeking admission to its doors, the college is within its legal and moral bounds; but to do this in such a way as to define the curriculum for every adolescent boy and girl in America, within and without its bounds, is to be untrue to the very principle of academic freedom which it holds sacred. As I see it, the average college is at present laboring under three misapprehensions regarding its entrance requirements:

1. It believes that examining its entrant by asking him to present evidence in the form of an office record of the subjects he has studied is the best means of determining his fitness for a college education. There is more scientific evidence to disprove than to prove this contention. The successful practical experiences of a growing number of colleges is a contradiction of this point of view.
2. It assumes that the study of certain subjects before college entrance is essential to successful pursuit of college courses. Here the college desires both background and discipline. The college student who can, without having worked off his short entrance unit, successfully pass the courses for which that given entrance unit was supposed to have been a pre-requisite is an embarrassment to this theory and a contradiction of its veracity. The shadow of discipline still hovers around the door of the registrar's office. Here again scientific experimentation has accumulated much evidence to show the ineffectiveness of general discipline or of the transfer of general learning.
3. The college assumes that it can specify its entrance requirements as it now does without being unfair to the high-school population or without being inconsistent with democratic ideals of universal education of which it itself is a component part. That it cannot do this can be demonstrated by an examination of the required entrance units and the content of the courses. An excellent example of the effect of the entrance unit requirement in a field outside of English may be illustrated by the condition in plane geometry in the State of Virginia. The State Board of Education does not require plane geometry for high school graduation, yet about 20% of the county boards of education in the state, if an unselected third of them can be said to be representative of all of them, have required plane geometry for graduation from high school because 20 Virginia colleges either demand it for an entrance unit or require it to be taken in college without credit. Similar conditions exist in the languages. The force of the college entrance requirement confronts the freshman and the sophomore.

In Virginia it is practically impossible to specify college entrance requirements as we now do and not require every high-school child outside of our city schools to conform to them or leave high school without graduating. Here again let me present figures from the reports of the high schools in the Southern Association. For the last five years in the eleven states reporting to this association, the number of high-school pupils who entered college was on the average only 7.4% of those enrolled in the high schools. In Virginia alone the percentage was 6.2%. Should our secondary schools be chiefly college preparatory schools if the needs of the 93% of the children from them who do not enter college be the dominant consideration? That high schools *are* college prep-schools, however, is certified partially by an examination of the figures showing the selectivity of the senior classes and the percentage of students in that group who go to college. Previously in this paper I have shown that in Virginia during the past five years only 15.3% of the students enrolled graduate from high school (a truly

select body); of this number only 46.6% have gone to college. This is the group the college is concerned with—only six children out of every one hundred who enter Virginia high schools. In fairness, may I ask you how many votes should the man in a business corporation be allowed who controls only 6% of the stock?

In the fourth and last place, what subject matter is of most worth to the adolescent child? Spencer raised a question the world has been trying to answer ever since. We do not know the definite answer, but educational philosophy based upon our social changes and these conditions in our high school which I have mentioned is proposing some characteristics of this subject matter.

It believes, first, that subject matter must be selected and arranged in accord with the following generally accepted contributions of modern educational theory: (1) General transfer is not automatic and inevitable. Certain definite principles must be followed to secure desirable transfer. (2) Desirable mental discipline does not come from studying what is merely difficult or unpleasant. The most potent example of our lack of faith in this tenet is that we rarely ever apply it to ourselves. (3) Provision must be made for this large heterogeneous group of children in the secondary schools. The high school must not expect all to master the same materials. (4) Education for social efficiency and for successful group participation in our increasingly complex society is essential. One does not learn to solve his life problems by memorizing the facts of historical significance or by recalling them in sequential order. Neither does one learn to be a worthy contributor to his social group by merely becoming a competent individual thinker. The dominant cry of progressive education as it concerns subject matter is that materials must be presented in a social setting when the need arises. Every course must be of maximum value within itself and must not depend upon future use for its justification. The theory that man must wait for the future to use his learning is not only a deleterious doctrine, but it is inconsistent with the demands of daily life, and contrary to the findings of experimental psychology.

With these foregoing facts and principles in mind, let me propose some basic assumptions regarding the English curriculum for your consideration in determining the content of our high-school course of study for Virginia. Let me make it clear at the outset that the high schools of the state have gone beyond the college entrance requirements as far as the number of high-school units required for graduation is concerned. Nearly all of the colleges in Virginia require three units in English for entrance, whereas the State Board of Education specifies four units for graduation. The difference of opinion between the high school and the college, therefore, is not over the *amount* of English taken in high school; but the polemic question centers in the nature and the purpose of the English studied. In presenting the aspects of this issue, I shall discuss them under the divisions of reading and expression.

The printed page is the one most important source of the child's information. Hence he should, first of all, be able to read well all the different kinds of materials which rightfully confront him during his secondary school experiences. Secondly, he should desire to read and should know where to find reading materials which will satisfy his needs and desires during this period. Literature should, therefore, afford him an opportunity to invest his leisure profitably, and the habit of turning to it frequently should be established in the secondary school.

There must be two dominant criteria for the selection of reading material for the high-school child: (1) Are the selections within the range of his comprehension with-

out undue effort, and (2) are the themes of the selections related to the child's experiences and to the paramount interests of adolescent children? From the high-school teacher's point of view, the ultimate objective in presenting any literary selection must be found within that writing itself. These criteria are obviously contrary to the intent of the well-known classifications of literature into short stories, novels, essays, lyrics, epics, and the like. Research can be of very great value to us here. Burke's Conciliation Speech studied for its fine qualities, The Fairy Queen, Sesame and Lilies, and much of Huxley, Lamb, and Ruskin now taught must go from the high-school course. The grade placement of many more well-known selections will also be changed. If the high school sends to the college a pupil who can read well and who loves literature, the level of college freshmen in English will be raised many times; the other alternative is to spend endless hours drilling on uncomprehended phrases to a mass of uninterested children. The results of this sort of training the college professor is now endeavoring to instruct.

In expression there are certain functional centers of speaking and writing. A child does not learn correctness by giving formal oral compositions in school and by making errors in conversation. The high-school English course should, therefore, seek out those functional centers of adolescent expression—conversation, group discussions, recounting experiences, business and social letters, formal and informal notes, etc. These experiences should receive much practice. To express oneself correctly in these situations requires a certain knowledge of form, of language and sentence structure, of spelling, of pronunciation, and the like. The essential facts which function in expression must be selected and taught as functional elements of speech and writing. Correct use, then, takes precedence over formal knowledge. That the necessity for these skills is not equally distributed among all children is common knowledge; the requirements must, therefore, be as flexible as the needs of these children.

To develop an interest in the effective use of the mother tongue is a responsibility of every one engaged in education from the first grade through the university, regardless of the subject he teaches. The medium of expression and a mastery of the technique of reading cut across every subject-matter line. To the child the mind of the English teacher, who seems to be the only one who cares about correct English, seems to be a phenomenon of nature. One step further, the secondary teacher of English must be relieved of the obligation of teaching the grammar of languages in the English course. If the grammar of Latin is essential in the study of Latin, the teacher of Latin is under obligation to present it; it is not the responsibility of the teacher of English to teach it as English grammar.

Let me summarize. We must build a program of secondary-school English which will be of maximum value to the adolescent child at the given years of his maturity. His needs and not the special interests of any group must be the determining force. We must choose those elements of language and literature which function most in the experiences of high-school children. We must provide for changes in requirements to care for the known variations of student capacities, abilities, and interests. We must present our choice of materials fairly, intelligently, and effectively. When these have been intelligently determined and properly taught, there is no good reason why the child should not master them and master them for good. With this training in high school the college must content itself and build upon it whatever program it deems, by intelligent study, to be of most profit to the student. It is for the student of the adolescent child, whether he be

teaching in high school or college, to determine what essentials that child is to study, and it is not for the college to specify arbitrarily. When these essentials are taught effectively and the college has a right to expect the high school to do that, the college may well cease to concern itself with what the student has studied and turn its attention to how skillfully and how easily he has learned. If the college is to be anything more than a continuation of the high school, it may as yet be a prediction to say that the child best prepared for college is the one who is capable of using his knowledge in a social situation to solve the problems of his maturity. He will excel the one who presents himself to the college doors with a head full of facts and a declaration of "I have had"—all in the past tense. I say it may now be a prediction; but it may well become a truism.

J. PAUL LEONARD

HOW MUCH GRAMMAR IN THE HIGH SCHOOL?

THE subject which I have been asked to speak briefly about is "How Much Grammar in the High School?" Last year one of our little girls wrote a play which she called "Slippery Business"—a title which, I think, might be a suitable designation for the business of teaching grammar. Indeed, so problematic is this business of teaching grammar that I am reminded of Tennyson's little verse, "Flower in the Crannied Wall," which, you remember, concludes:

> . . . . . if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

After working early and late upon a unit on verb usage our teacher of grammar teaches the unit as carefully as she can and two days after its conclusion hears one of her pupils shout, "He never done it!" At such a time we all feel that if we knew how to develop within three or four weeks language habits which would supercede undesirable ones, we should know "what God and man is."

I have long wished that a group of English teachers from Virginia high schools might sit down with a group of college teachers of English for a lengthy and an informal discussion of our intentions and results, and also for the purpose of articulating a list of specific grammar objectives to be set up for various levels of the high school and for the college freshman. I earnestly hope that such an effort will be made soon.

However, most of us are sufficiently experienced not to be misled by mirages. We realize that when we set up grammar goals for different levels of achievement in the secondary school we have only begun an effort to name our problem. For grammar is a slippery business, and goals definitely tabulated have ways of seeming to disperse before our eyes, or of showing themselves inextricably bound with others. Therefore, in reply to our question, "How Much Grammar in the High School?" I say, first that a set of specific goals is desirable and will aid us greatly in clarifying our problem, but, second, that grammar is a slippery business, that a set of goals can never be the final solution to our problem, and, third, that our goals as well as our technique must become much more experimental.

For a decade or more we have witnessed the slow death of formal and scientific grammar pursued with a passion for scientific exactitude. We feel now that most of our grammar teaching in high school should be done through sufficient practice to inculcate permanent habits. The teacher of functional grammar keeps a set of compositions on file and watches week by week the pupil's demonstration in his writing of grammatical principles learned in the regular grammar class. Lengthy arguments